United Nations A/59/230

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 August 2004

Original: English

Fifty-ninth session
Item 94 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Training and research

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 58/223. The report reviews briefly the ongoing programmes of UNITAR, highlighting the main features of each of them and indicating how they respond to the recommendations contained in the resolution. The report places special emphasis on the strengthening of partnerships between the Institute and other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system achieved in the framework of each of the programmes. The financial viability of the Institute has become a less urgent issue, due to the reliable performance of special purpose grants. However, the voluntary contributions to the general fund remain low, thus putting at risk some of the most traditional training programmes of UNITAR. The report concludes by providing a number of recommendations.

* A/59/150.

04-45736 (E) 080904

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 58/223, in which the General Assembly, inter alia, reaffirmed the relevance of UNITAR in view of the growing importance of training within the United Nations, the training requirements of States and the relevance of the training-related research activities undertaken by the Institute within its mandate; underlined the need to develop further and to expand the scope of partnerships built between the Institute and other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular at the country level; stressed that the courses of the Institute should focus primarily on development issues and the management of international affairs; and stressed the need to resolve expeditiously the issues related to the rent, debt, rental rates and maintenance costs of the Institute.

2. UNITAR has fully regained its place in the Organization. Its training and capacity-building programmes have been strongly consolidated over the last decade. The overall number of seminars, workshops and conferences organized by UNITAR during the period under review remained the same as in the previous such period, at about 130. However, the number of beneficiaries increased substantially to over 7,800 persons, compared to about 6,000 for the previous period, owing to increased enrolment. Continuing research on training activities has led to the development of innovative and useful methodologies that improve the quality of the training and increase its usefulness for the trainees.

3. The financial viability of the Institute has become a less critical issue due to the good performance of special purpose grants. However, the voluntary contributions to the general fund remain low, thus putting at risk some of the most traditional training programmes of UNITAR. The issue regarding the rental and maintenance costs for the Institute premises remains and will be debated by the Fifth Committee during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

4. Given that the Executive Director of UNITAR has submitted a detailed report on UNITAR activities,[1] the present report only briefly reviews ongoing programmes, highlighting their main features and indicating how they respond to the recommendations contained in the resolution. The report places special emphasis on the strengthening of partnerships between UNITAR and other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system in accordance with the framework of each of these programmes.

II. An overview of current programmes

A. Multilateral diplomacy and international affairs management

5. The UNITAR multilateral diplomacy and international affairs management programme continues to offer an extensive menu of training opportunities aimed at enhancing the professional performance of diplomats and other government officials, with a view to ensuring efficient and effective decision-making in international affairs. The programme offers the following three pillars of activities:

(a) Training for the diplomatic communities of Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi;

(b) Tailor-made training;

(c) Fellowship programmes on international law, the international civil service and building capacities for human security and development.

6. Since June 2003, the programme has offered 11 training activities for the benefit of Geneva-based diplomats, three for the diplomatic community of Vienna and one for the diplomatic community of Nairobi. The majority of the participants were from developing countries. The number of training sessions offered in Geneva has increased owing to a strengthening of institutional ties with the Graduate Institute of Development Studies and the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

7. The tailor-made training activities of the programme have increased significantly. In the period under review and upon the request of several countries, diplomatic academies and organizations, the programme delivered 11 tailor-made activities for the benefit of Ecuador, the Gambia, Indonesia, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Thailand, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and the United Nations Compensation Commission. Only three of them took place in Geneva, while the rest were held in the requesting countries.

8. In terms of partnerships and as in previous years, the UNITAR programme has been implementing fellowship programmes on international law, in cooperation with the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, on the international civil service, conducted with the Agence intergouvernementale de la francophonie, the École Nationale d'administration and the Institut des relations internationales du Cameroun, and on building capacities for human security and development, in partnership with the Government of Japan.

B. Peacemaking and preventive diplomacy

9. Several programmes are being carried out by the Institute under the broader umbrella of the programme in peacemaking and preventive diplomacy, as detailed in paragraph 11 below. The overall goal of each of those programmes is to build capacity for the prevention and resolution of violent conflict.

Programme for briefing and debriefing special representatives, personal representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General

10. Recent activities under this programme have included interviews with current and past special representatives in order to preserve and pass on their valuable lessons and experience to new special representatives and thus refine and enhance United Nations peace operations. The second edition of the publication *On Being a Special Representative of the Secretary-General* is being prepared for use by new special representatives during their briefings and thereafter. The publication will also be distributed to all current special representatives and senior Headquarters staff, as has already been done with a set of DVDs on those interviews. The programme involves a regular seminar, which brings together the special representatives and senior Headquarters staff to discuss the many issues related to work in the field. The third such seminar will be held in Switzerland in the last quarter of 2004.

UNITAR-International Peace Academy fellowship programme in peacemaking and preventive diplomacy

11. The eleventh programme in the series was organized in Norway in June and July 2004. This annual event provides advanced training in conflict analysis, negotiation and mediation for middle- and senior-level staff members of the United Nations, diplomats and representatives of regional organizations with a view to strengthening institutional capacities in those areas. The primary focus of the programme is on preventing and resolving disputes through the involvement of the United Nations.

Regional training programmes to enhance conflict prevention and peace-building in Africa

12. The training programmes are conducted annually in Addis Ababa and Cape Town, South Africa, and are now in their fifth year. The programmes seek to increase the number of governmental and non-governmental officials in Africa who are trained in conflict analysis, negotiation and mediation skills. The next such programme is planned for December 2004 in Addis Ababa.

Training programme to enhance the conflict prevention and peace-building capacities of indigenous people representatives

13. Also now in its fifth year, the international programme is organized in Switzerland for the representatives of indigenous peoples from around the world. It aims at strengthening their capacities to more effectively negotiate having their needs met, while building constructive relationships with other stakeholders and negotiation partners. The 2004 regional training programme will be held in Africa in November.

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14. In the framework of the above programmes, UNITAR works in close partnership with the United Nations Secretariat, other United Nations bodies, ministries for foreign affairs and defence and civil society organizations to share the latest developments in the field. Scholars, practitioners of conflict resolution, special representatives and other senior United Nations staff serve as resource persons in the fellowship programmes and Africa programmes. Indigenous experts, special rapporteurs and representatives of regional organizations serve as the primary resource persons for the indigenous peoples training programmes.

C. Correspondence instruction in peacekeeping operations

15. The UNITAR programme of correspondence instruction in peacekeeping operations was established to provide standard distance training that would be universally available at a low cost to a large population of students worldwide. Since 1995, in cooperation with the Training and Evaluation Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the training has been offered to students through self-paced correspondence courses, originally in the form of printed course booklets but more recently on CD-ROM and online in downloadable form. Each of the 16 courses offered covers a different aspect of peacekeeping. All courses are available in English, while two are also available in French, one in German, one in Russian,

five in Spanish and three in Swahili. During the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 December 2003, there were 4,145 enrolments, with students coming from 122 nations. The programme is completely financially self-supporting through its enrolment revenue.

16. Each course consists of a series of lessons containing objectives, training materials and a final quiz. A comprehensive examination is given at the end of the course. If students meet the minimum passing score of 75 per cent, they receive a certificate of completion. For students without access to the Internet, the course may be done through the mail. Moreover, a cooperative programme has been established that links distance training with classroom courses on every continent, provided by selected universities and national training programmes. Students who complete a classroom course, one correspondence course per month for 12 months and an original research thesis are awarded a certificate of training in United Nations peace support operations. Eight United Nations peacekeeping missions print and distribute the courses directly to mission personnel.

D. Women and children in and after conflict

17. The UNITAR training programme for civilian personnel in peacekeeping operations on the special needs of women and children in conflict has been running since December 2001. Between June 2003 and June 2004, it brought awareness-raising workshops on gender and child protection to the international and local staff of three additional United Nations field missions, namely in Kosovo, Timor-Leste and Afghanistan. The three seminars in Kosovo, two in Timor-Leste and five in Afghanistan, reached well over 200 participants, including non-United Nations staff who had been invited as observers, such as representatives of non-governmental organizations and government experts.

18. Seminar curricula were developed in close cooperation with agencies active in the field of women's and children's rights, many of whom readily took over part of the teaching tasks. Within the United Nations system, fruitful collaboration continued with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and an implementing partner of UNICEF (Save the Children). The project in Afghanistan benefited from the involvement of three new partners from within the United Nations system, namely the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the World Food Programme and the World Bank. Other partners supporting the training projects included the International Committee of the Red Cross, which continued to be involved in Kosovo and Timor-Leste, while cooperation with governmental structures was successfully achieved in Kosovo and Afghanistan. At the UNITAR headquarters level, close contacts continued between the Institute and two think tanks set up by the Government of Switzerland, namely the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

E. Environmental law

19. Various workshops were organized under the UNITAR environmental law programme during the period under review. Among them, workshops in Madagascar and Croatia dealt with integrated coastal management, while specialized workshops

for magistrates held in various parts of France dealt with such issues as waste management, water management and environmental impact assessment. A workshop on trade and the environment was organized for African participants in cooperation with the Université de La Rochelle. An academic visit to introduce UNITAR environmental law courses into the syllabus of universities in Senegal resulted in the establishment of a partnership between the University of Saint Louis and UNITAR. In the framework of this programme, new partnerships have also been developed between the Institute and the legal unit of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Regional Office for Europe in Geneva; the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States; various local authorities in the province of Lombardy, Italy; the European Lawyers' Union; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

F. Climate change

20. The activities carried out by the UNITAR climate change programme are driven by the recommendations contained in the framework for capacity-building in developing countries of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The framework identifies the scope of, and basis for action on, capacity-building related to the implementation of the Convention and the effective participation of developing countries in the Kyoto Protocol process. In particular, the framework underscores the importance of mobilizing existing institutions in developing countries and building on existing processes and endogenous capacities at the regional, national or local levels in order to ensure the sustainability of such programmes. Over the last 12 months, the programme has concentrated its efforts on achieving those objectives, while strengthening working relationships with United Nations entities such as UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the sustainable development programme of the secretariat of the Convention.

Project to develop climate change training capacities in Asian and African partner institutions

21. Rather than developing training programmes in a centralized manner from Geneva, this project seeks to strengthen the national human resource and institutional capacity of developing countries (non-annex I parties to the Convention) for effective negotiation, policy analysis and coordination. To that end, it provides financial resources and technical advice to centres within these countries. The immediate target groups include three regional centres in Africa and Asia, which are direct partners to the project, namely Environnement et développement du tiers-monde in Senegal; the University of Cape Town Energy Research Centre in South Africa; and the Munasinghe Institute for Development in Sri Lanka. The intention is for the partners to reach out and target the Convention national focal points, senior-level climate negotiators, focal points for bilateral and multilateral development assistance and other concerned government actors and stakeholder groups in the targeted regions. The main project activities jointly carried out in cooperation with partners include:

(a) Regional development of climate change training programmes (tools and methods), using the facility of a web-based interactive platform developed by UNITAR;

(b) Training of local trainers and implementation of selected training programmes;

(c) A study on the feasibility of developing a web-based interactive distance learning programme to support the negotiating and policy analysis capacity of developing countries.

The first Project steering committee meeting was held in Milan, Italy, on 7 and 8 December 2003, and was followed by a project advisory panel on 8 December 2003. A second project steering committee meeting was held in Bonn, Germany, on 20 June 2004, followed by a project advisory panel. In both cases, the meetings were chaired by a representative of the Convention secretariat and panel members included at least two representatives of developing countries (South Africa and Mali).

Projects to provide technical assistance to least developed countries and small island developing States

22. Two projects funded by the UNDP Global Environment Facility (GEF) were developed by UNITAR, as agreed upon at the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to enhance the capacity and community involvement of national institutions in managing national adaptation programmes of action. Four training workshops have been organized under the guidance of the least developed countries expert group, in cooperation with other interested bilateral and multilateral agencies and the active role of national facilitators, in the following countries:

(a) Samoa, for five small island developing States/least developed countries country teams in March 2003;

(b) Ethiopia, for 12 anglophone least developed countries country teams in June 2003;

(c) Bhutan, for eight Asian least developed countries country teams in September 2003;

(d) Burkina Faso, for 23 francophone least developed countries country teams in October 2003.

The results from a survey conducted by UNITAR at the conclusion of the workshops revealed important needs, such as the need for operational support to implement national projects. As a first response to that concern, the UNITAR climate change programme, in cooperation with the sustainable development programme and the least developed countries expert group, produced a training manual. Targeted and focused training in 2004 in the West African countries is currently under preparation, in full cooperation with the UNITAR climate change programme in-country partners. These activities will be further developed in cooperation with the least developed countries expert group and the GEF implementing agencies.

G. Chemicals and waste management

23. In the course of 2003-2004, the UNITAR chemicals and waste management programme continued to diversify, expand and develop new partnerships. A number of methodologies developed by UNITAR (e.g., national profile and action plan development) have been mainstreamed into the capacity development activities of

various United Nations partner organizations to assist countries in implementing international chemicals management agreements, such as the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. A new programme has been initiated to assist countries with implementation of the Stockholm Convention. In particular, a project is under way with UNDP and GEF, to assist least developed countries in strengthening their skills for action plan development. Innovative work has also been undertaken to identify synergies for capacity-building under international chemicals and waste-management agreements, through pilot projects funded by the Government of Switzerland. At the international level, a workshop organized by UNITAR in March 2004 brought together representatives from six convention secretariats, as well as 75 countries and stakeholder groups, to discuss related opportunities for synergies in capacity-building. Significant progress has also been made to assist some 20 additional countries in preparing national chemicals management profiles, organizing national priority setting workshops and developing a national chemical safety web site, with resources from the European Commission and the Government of Switzerland.

24. The global partnership for capacity-building to implement the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, which was launched at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and for which UNITAR provides the secretariat, has gained significant momentum in 2003-2004, with initial resources provided by the Governments of the Netherlands and Switzerland and more than 20 partners contributing in-kind resources. Discussions with the International Council of Chemical Associations are progressing to facilitate a concrete contribution of the chemical industry to the partnership. As a spin-off to the above programmes, UNITAR established a new programme on environmental democracy in 2003. It initially assists pilot countries in preparing a national profile related to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, and conducts research and provides guidance and training on effective public participation in a developing country context.

H. Decentralized cooperation

25. The decentralized cooperation programme aims at reinforcing the capacities of local authorities (parliamentarians, mayors) and their local partners (civil society and the private sector) in the field of sustainable urban development (water and sanitation, waste management, transportation, energy), the information society (e-governance, e-administration, e-democracy) and humanitarian affairs (HIV/AIDS, cultural diversity, urban safety). This objective is achieved through a network of international training centres for local actors in the following cities:

(a) Kuala Lumpur and Shanghai (China) for the Asia-Pacific region;

(b) Ouagadougou and Durban (South Africa) for Africa;

(c) Curitiba (Brazil) for Latin America and the Caribbean;

(d) Plock (Poland) for Central and Eastern Europe;

(e) Divonne-les-Bains and Lyon (France), Bilbao and Barcelona (Spain) for Europe.

Each centre organizes between three and five training sessions annually, in collaboration with national Governments, various United Nations agencies and programmes (among them UN-Habitat, UNDP, UNEP, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the World Bank Institute and the Global Compact Office), international associations of elected representatives (such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the United Cities and Local Governments organization, the Federation of Latin American Cities, Municipalities and Associations, the Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements and the Municipal Development Partnership) and private companies (such as Veolia Environment, Alcatel, Total Dexia and Orlen).

26. In the light of the results achieved during the World Summit on Sustainable Development and a conference on information technology held in Bilbao, the decentralized cooperation programme was solicited and encouraged to replicate a preparatory process for local authorities for the World Summit on the Information Society. This reflected the realization by world regions and local authorities of the importance of mobilizing in order to define their basic roles in the new information society. Following a number of regional preparatory meetings, the World Summit for Local Authorities on the Information Society was held in Lyon, on 4 and 5 December 2003. Its results were communicated to the heads of State and other participants at the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva, during an event jointly organized by the cities of Geneva and Lyon, to which several partners were associated, including the World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination and UNITAR.

27. At the request of the private sector and local authorities, in recognizing their role and responsibilities in implementing the Millennium Development Goals in general and providing access to basic services (water and sanitation, waste management, transport, energy) in particular, UNITAR and UN-Habitat jointly prepared a working paper entitled "Access to basic services for all: partnerships and right-based approach". The paper was presented at the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, held in New York in April 2004, and was discussed in detail with representatives of all stakeholders, including representatives of the Governments of Brazil, France, South Africa and Switzerland, the private sector, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, AXILIO, non-governmental organizations (the Research and Technological Exchange Group, the Institut de la gestion déléguée, the Global Ecovillage Network, European Foundation for the Development of the Regions), associations of local authorities (the Municipal Development Partnership for Africa, the Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements for Asia), local authorities (the Mayors of Ouagadougou and of San Fernando, the Philippines) and United Nations bodies (UNEP, UNDP, the International Labour Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNITAR and UN-Habitat). All parties expressed their common interest in establishing internationally agreed principles, which would assist each Government and the various stakeholders in improving the provision of basic services for all.

28. At the request of several associations of local authorities that wished to understand, develop and reinforce their cooperation with the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, and vice versa, a meeting was organized at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 23 and 24 October 2003, in cooperation with the United Nations Office at Geneva, UN-Habitat, the World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination, the Swiss federal authorities, and the canton and the city of Geneva. The meeting brought together high-level representatives of the associations of local authorities and the United Nations programmes and agencies. A series of concrete suggestions aimed at reinforcing the partnership between the two sides emerged as a result, including the suggestion to create a working group, which would meet on a regular basis.

I. Legal aspects of debt and financial management

29. The UNITAR training and capacity-building programme in the legal aspects of debt and financial management continues to offer a broad menu of training and capacity-building services intended for government officials, debt managers and central bankers from sub-Saharan Africa (English and French-speaking), the Central Asian Republics and Azerbaijan, as well as Viet Nam. The programme offers regional training for debt managers; in-country workshops to build necessary skills; and training on the development of national profiles to ameliorate the legal infrastructure that governs public finance and borrowing. UNITAR conducts all of its regional and in-country training under this programme with its partners, namely the Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute, the West African Institute for Financial Management, Pôle-Dette (Yaoundé), the Regional Office in Bishkek of the International Monetary Fund and the Ministry of Finance of Viet Nam.

30. The programme has leveraged new information technologies with a view to extending its training and information services for debt managers from developing countries, including least developed countries and highly indebted poor countries. A suite of online learning courses has been developed and are offered on a regular basis, including six-week courses on negotiation of financial transactions, capital market development and regulation, arbitration and alternative dispute resolution and the mechanics of loan agreements. The "e-learning for debt managers" initiative has been very successful and discussions are under way to share UNITAR experience with its international and regional partners with a view to introducing new information technologies in training at the regional level. The UNITAR web service for debt managers has been receiving a large number of hits from visitors who seek information, documents, best practices, training modules and glossaries.

J. Projects carried out by the UNITAR New York Office

31. Over the last 12 months, more than 1,600 participants have attended courses, workshops and briefings organized by the UNITAR New York Office. These programmes are consistent with previous practices in that they cover the range of needs of diplomats in New York, including (a) orientations regarding the United Nations system and its various organs and components; (b) training on substantive issues, such as trade, legal instruments and socio-economic development; and (c) building skills in such areas as negotiation, the use of information technology and the drafting of United Nations resolutions.

32. The New York Office maintains close cooperation with partners, such as the Information and Communications Technology Task Force and the Intel Corporation, for the organization and delivery of programming in the information and communications technology fields. A new web-based programme, global e-learning, is in its first year and aims to train civil servants in their capitals around the world on information and communications technology. The Office recently assisted 26 permanent missions to the United Nations in upgrading their web sites and getting better equipped so as to maintain them themselves in the future. This was accomplished through a very productive partnership with DePaul University. The Office also works very closely with the Secretariat, as well as affiliated United Nations bodies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and academia. Experts from these UNITAR partners were active as resource persons in almost all of the 40 courses that were offered by the New York Office in the last 12 months.

K. Projects carried out by the UNITAR Hiroshima Office for Asia and the Pacific

33. After a two-year pilot phase, the UNITAR Hiroshima Office for Asia and the Pacific was officially established in July 2003. UNITAR thus became the first United Nations agency to establish a presence in Hiroshima, in response to the desire of its people and authorities to contribute more actively to peace and development around the world.

34. The priority mandate of the Office is to provide training to government officials, scholars and members of civil society in the region. In the first cycle (2003-2006) of operations, the Office is to carry out seven major projects annually. The themes selected, identified jointly by UNITAR and its Hiroshima and other Asian partners, are: (a) post-conflict reconstruction; (b) a fellowship programme for Afghanistan (three consecutive events in Hiroshima and in Afghanistan, supported by distance learning and mentoring); (c) management of natural and cultural world heritage sites; (d) international economics and finance; (e) maritime disaster preparedness; (f) international peacekeeping (distance learning project); and (g) the Kushiro training series on biodiversity. A cross-cutting theme, the design and development of training methodologies, is to be a key component of all such activities. In the period November 2003-July 2004, the Office has already organized events under five of the themes mentioned above.

35. Establishing partnerships throughout the region and beyond will remain a pillar of the work of the Office. Already, substantive cooperation with a number of partners has been established, including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the World Bank global development learning network, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the Getty Conservation Institute, Hiroshima University, the University of Texas at Austin, the Seton Hall University Stillman School of Business and the International Ocean Institute. As programmes expand, so too will the network of UNITAR partners be able to further the work and message of the Institute in the Asia-Pacific region.

III. Financial matters

36. The funding of the UNITAR special purpose grant programmes is satisfactory. However and notwithstanding the systematic and continuous efforts of the UNITAR Board of Trustees, the level of voluntary contributions to the general fund remains low. This jeopardizes the future of some of the programmes offered, free of charge, to diplomats and delegates from all nations, who are accredited to the United Nations in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi.

37. In accordance with the financial report for the biennium 2002-2003 transmitted to the Board of Auditors, the total income of the general fund for that period increased by 12.7 per cent relative to the income for the previous biennium, from $1,699,160 to $1,915,193. An increase in programme support income of $473,011 that was due to an increase in expenditures under the special purpose grants fund was offset by a continuing decline of $214,039 in voluntary contributions. Total expenditures in the 2002-2003 biennium increased by 14.3 per cent, from $1,790,253 to $2,045,373, mainly due to higher staffing costs, reflecting the effects of a weaker United States dollar. Total reserves and fund balances as at 31 December 2003 declined to $626,461 from $772,520 at the end of the previous biennium.

38. With regard to the special purpose grants fund, total income for the biennium 2002-2003 increased sharply by 29.7 per cent, from $11,252,398 to $14,595,636, due to higher contributions from Governments. Reflecting the higher income, total expenditures also increased by 46.3 per cent, from $9,032,399 to $13,214,702, due mainly to an increase in the number of new projects established during 2002-2003. Total reserves and fund balances as at 31 December 2003 increased to $5,997,601, from $4,482,891 at the end of the previous biennium.

39. In its resolution 58/223, the Assembly stressed the need to take action to resolve expeditiously the issues related to UNITAR rent, debt, rental rates and maintenance costs, taking into account its financial situation, and welcomed the consideration of those issues by the Fifth Committee.

40. In its resolution 58/272, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to invite the Board of Trustees of UNITAR to rationalize the financial structure of the Institute, including through the possible application of a consistent programme support rate to the special purpose grants fund in order to bring it in line with the standard rate applied by the United Nations, and decided to revert to the question at its fifty-ninth session.

41. The UNITAR Board of Trustees made recommendations on the issues indicated in paragraphs 39 and 40 above during its forty-second session, held in Geneva from 27 to 29 May 2004. Those recommendations will be submitted separately to the General Assembly.

IV. Recommendations

42. **UNITAR should continue to consolidate its training and capacity-building programmes. Their further expansion will be limited by the funds available.**

43. **Member States should make the best possible use of the programmes offered by UNITAR. There is a large scope for establishing partnerships,**

through the network now established by UNITAR, between Governments and institutions from donor countries and their counterparts in recipient countries.

44. The financial viability of UNITAR remains an issue. While the situation of the programmes financed by special purpose grants is satisfactory, the non-earmarked contributions to the general fund remain seriously inadequate. Member States should consider resuming or increasing their contributions.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 14* (A/59/14).

United Nations A/59/231

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 September 2004

Original: English

Fifty-ninth session

Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the fifty-ninth session

Cooperation between the United Nations and the community of Portuguese-speaking countries

Letter dated 26 August 2004 from the Representatives of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Timor-Leste and Sao Tome and Principe to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Upon instruction from our Governments, we have the honour to request, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that you include in the agenda of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly an item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries".

Pursuant to rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we attach a draft resolution.

We further have the honour to request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ismael Abraão **Gaspar Martins**
Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Ronaldo Mota **Sardenberg**
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Luis de Matos Monteiro **da Fonseca**
Permanent Representative of Cape Verde to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Alfredo Lopes **Cabral**
Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Filipe **Chidumo**
Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations

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(*Signed*) Goncalo Aires **de Santa Clara Gomes**
Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations

(*Signed*) José Luis **Guterres**
Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Domingos Augusto **Ferreira**
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Sao Tome and Principe to the United Nations

Annex

Draft resolution

Proposal for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries"

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 54/10 of 18 November 1999 which it granted observer status to the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and considered it advantageous to both the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries to provide for cooperation between the two organizations,

Recalling also the Articles of the Charter of the United Nations that encourage activities through regional cooperation for the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations,

Considering that the activities of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries complement and support the work of the United Nations,

Welcoming the participation of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries in the fifth high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations, held in New York on 29 and 30 July 2003,

1. *Invites* the Secretary-General of the United Nations to undertake consultations with the Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries with a view to promoting cooperation between the two secretariats, in particular by encouraging meetings that enable their representatives to consult one another on projects, measures and procedures that will facilitate and expand cooperation and coordination between the two organizations;

2. *Requests* the specialized agencies and other bodies and programmes of the United Nations to cooperate to this end with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session;

4. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries".

United Nations A/59/232

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 September 2004

Original: English

Fifty-ninth session

Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the fifty-ninth session

Observer status for the Economic Community of West African States in the General Assembly

Letter dated 15 September 2004 from the Representatives of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

In accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and pursuant to a decision of the 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of 4 July 2004, we have the honour to request the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, entitled "Observer status for the Economic Community of West African States in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum on the matter has been attached (see annex I), as well as a draft resolution (see annex II).

(*Signed*) Joel W. **Adechi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Benin

(*Signed*) Michel **Kafando**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Burkina Faso

(*Signed*) Herminio **Moniz**
Chargé d'affaires of the Republic of Cape Verde

(*Signed*) Philippe D. **Djangone-bi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire

04-51741 (E) 230904

(*Signed*) Crispin **Grey-Johnson**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Gambia

(*Signed*) Alpha Ibrahima **Sow**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Guinea

(*Signed*) Alfredo Lopes **Cabral**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau

(*Signed*) Lami **Kawah**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Liberia

(*Signed*) Cheick Sidi **Diarra**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Mali

(*Signed*) Ousmane **Moutari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Niger

(*Signed*) Aminu Bashir **Wali**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

(*Signed*) Paul **Badji**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Senegal

(*Signed*) Joe Robert **Pemagbi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone

(*Signed*) Kodjo **Menan**
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Togo

(*Signed*) Nana **Effah-Apenteng**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana
Chairman of ECOWAS

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum submitted under rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Establishment

The treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), signed on 28 May 1975, consolidated the process leading to the establishment of ECOWAS. Pursuant to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, the treaty was registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Membership

ECOWAS is made up of the following 15 member States of West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

Aims and purpose

The creation of ECOWAS arose from the determination to accelerate the economic and social development of the States of West Africa through effective cooperation. To that end, ECOWAS has as its principal aim the integration of the national economies into an economic and monetary union. This involves the promotion of cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity, particularly agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions, and social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its peoples, increasing and maintaining economic stability, fostering closer relationship among its members and contributing to the progress and development of the African continent.

Institutions of ECOWAS

The work and activities of ECOWAS are carried out through the following structures: Authority of Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers, Executive Secretariat, ECOWAS Parliament, ECOWAS Court of Justice, ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development, West African Health Organization, West African Monetary Agency, and technical and specialized commissions (covering all sectors and meeting at both the senior official and ministerial levels).

Activities, achievements and cooperation with the United Nations

The creation of an economic and monetary union has involved ECOWAS countries in various regional programmes aimed at market, monetary, physical, production and political integration. The market integration programme led to the establishment of West Africa as a free-trade area in January 2000, accompanied by a regional transit arrangement for goods; a common external tariff is to be introduced in January 2005 as the next step towards a customs union. Free movement of persons within the region has been achieved and member States have adopted common ECOWAS passports and travel certificates. A common currency is being created on a gradual basis through the establishment of a second monetary zone by July 2005, which is to be merged later with the existing CFA franc zone. A regional payments arrangement exists and an ECOWAS travellers cheque has been introduced.

ECOWAS physical integration programmes have led to the development of a network of trans-West African highways and a regional system of telecommunication links. In the field of energy, a West African power pool is being created which involves the coordinated generation, transmission, distribution and marketing of power from conventional, new and renewable sources of energy. In the real sector, ECOWAS is promoting public/private partnerships to create a conducive business environment. This involves assistance to regional professional bodies of the organized private sector in organizing such events as regional trade fairs, industrial forums and buyer/seller meetings for promoting joint ventures and trans-border investments.

ECOWAS has played a pioneering role in the developing world with the establishment of a mechanism for regional peace and security. The ECOWAS mediation and peacekeeping operations entity (ECOMOG) helped to resolve the civil conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire. A regional early-warning system and a high-level mediation organ form part of the ECOWAS conflict-prevention mechanism in operation in West Africa.

Over the years, ECOWAS has developed very close working relations with the United Nations system. The active involvement of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) led to the creation of ECOWAS, and since then ECA has supported key programmes, including the rationalization of West African intergovernmental organizations. ECOWAS involves the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Trade Centre and the World Trade Organization in its trade development programmes. United Nations Industrial Development Organization assisted in the formulation of an ECOWAS regional industrial master plan and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is involved in the adoption of a common agricultural policy and a regional food security programme for West Africa. The International Telecommunication Union is an active partner in the modernization of the regional telecommunications system; similarly, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization are involved in the ECOWAS environment programmes. The World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund participate in the social and cultural cooperation programmes (health, education, culture, gender and child protection). The United Nations Development Programme (particularly its Regional Bureau for Africa) and the Security Council have been involved in the ECOWAS economic integration and regional security initiatives, respectively.

Conclusion

It is the hope of ECOWAS that its desire to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations is shared by all members of the General Assembly and that a decision will be taken at the fifty-ninth session inviting ECOWAS to participate in the session and work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Economic Community of West African States in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Desirous of promoting cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States,

1. *Decides* to invite the Economic Community of West African States to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to implement the present resolution.